

Path to Productivity

WITH TODAY'S shrinking resources, organizations are working hard to help employees improve efficiency as a way to boost productivity. But being efficient does not necessarily make one more productive.

At least not according to Timothy Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Workweek*, who believes that there's a difference between efficiency and effectiveness, and being effective is a much better professional goal – and the key to productivity. He believes that being effective is about doing the *right* things versus being efficient, which is getting good at performing something – whether it's important in the long run or not.

Ferriss believes that being effective means realigning tasks so you are “doing the things that get you closer to your goals,” and prioritizing the “right” tasks – those that produce the outcomes most important to your organization. How do you know which tasks are the right ones? According to Ferriss, it's as easy as Pareto's Law.

Vilfredo Pareto was a Swiss economist who, around the turn of the nineteenth century, developed the mathematical formula that became known as Pareto's Law, or the “80/20 Principle.”

Pareto's Law – that 80 percent of desired results come from 20 percent of the efforts expended – applies to many workplace outcomes. It can also be said that 80 percent of problems arise from 20 percent of sources.

According to Ferriss, the 80/20 rule can help you eliminate inefficiency. To get started, ask yourself these questions: Which 20 percent of sources cause 80 percent of problems (and wasted efforts), and which 20 percent of sources cause

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MAINTAIN DON'T GAIN

THE AVERAGE PERSON puts on some extra pounds in the six weeks between the Thanksgiving holiday and the New Year. Unfortunately, weight gained in a short six weeks may take six months to lose. And if you had already been trying to shed a few pounds, putting on that holiday weight can really give you the blues.

Take heart. Adding pounds during the holidays is **not** inevitable. You can enjoy your holiday meals and still face that scale with pride by the New Year. One way you can do that is by moving your resolution date up two months and making a **November Resolution** to “maintain; not gain” this holiday season.

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Federal Occupational Health (FOH)

The Occupational Health Provider of Choice for the Federal Government

The mission of FOH is to improve the health, safety, and productivity of the federal workforce. Created by Congress in 1946, FOH is a non-appropriated service agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). FOH offers a full range of occupational health services—including Clinical, Wellness/Fitness, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Work/Life, Organizational Development, and Environmental Health and Safety programs—exclusively to federal employees.

Visit FOH on the Web at www.foh.hhs.gov, or call 800-457-9808.

FEDERAL INFORMATION LINKS

U.S. Department of Health and
Human Services

www.HHS.gov

White House Blog

www.Whitehouse.gov/blog

Organ and Tissue Donation Initiative

www.OrganDonor.gov

CDC Disaster Preparedness

www.bt.CDC.gov/disasters

Government-wide information on
pandemic influenza

www.Flu.gov

Influenza Information from CDC

www.CDC.gov/flu

National Diabetes Education
Program

<http://ndep.NIH.gov>

NATIONAL HEALTH OBSERVANCES

October 1-31

Healthy Lung Month

www.lungusa.org

November 1 – 30

American Diabetes Month

www.diabetes.org

December 1 – 31

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

www.americaonthemove.org

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Consider these resolutions:

MAKE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE

A major contributor to weight gain during holidays is sedentary living. Holiday schedules are tight and exercise schedules are often sacrificed to make time. Don't make that trade-off this year and pledge to keep moving.

PRIORITIZE HEALTHY EATING

Dieticians agree that the best way to manage weight is to modify eating habits in such a way that you never feel deprived. Choose foods that you actually enjoy that are also lower in fat, sugar, and calories.

Feel free to fill your plate at holiday feasts, but select fresh fruits, salad greens, and filling veggies instead of sugary desserts, fried foods, mountains of breads, or starchy entrees. You can still eat the “other” foods you enjoy, but take a smaller portion.

Here are some more ideas for keeping trim during the holidays.

- When eating turkey, choose white meat over dark. A 3-ounce serving of turkey breast (skinless) has 119 calories and 1 gram of fat (compared to dark meat with 145 calories/5 grams).
- If you're cooking, provide at least one healthier option per category. For dessert, offer a fresh fruit option. For side dishes, offer a vegetable option instead of potatoes or rice. If you are going to a party, bring a healthy dish that you can enjoy.
- When dining out, decline the bread and butter plate or limit yourself to just one piece.
- Pass up alcohol. One mixed drink can contain up to 300 calories; a serving of eggnog is around 400.

Resolve to maintain and don't gain and you'll have no regrets come January 1st. Plus, maintaining a stable healthy weight has many health benefits including managing and preventing type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. Learn more about healthy eating at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) <http://health.nih.gov/topic/WeightLossDieting>.

Contact FOH to learn about individualized weight loss counseling and education services.



I HAVE TO TAKE THIS CALL

IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED, instant communication workplace, cell phones are a necessity. But if misused, they can diminish face-to-face communications and become an office irritation.

Powerful cell phone applications and the expectation that employees be accessible have changed the business landscape. And given that cell phones – nonexistent prior to the 1990s – represent a relatively new social phenomenon, there are few established norms for their use.

Here are some basics of good workplace cell phone etiquette.

RING TONE

The ring should be professional and subtle. Putting cell phones on vibrate or silent mode is preferable. However vibrating phones left unattended on desktops can be irritating.

MEETINGS

Cell phones should be off or silent during meetings. If you forget and the phone rings, turn it off *without* answering and apologize. In most situations, taking a call or texting during a meeting is a no-no and may give the impression that you are disengaged from – and possibly place less value on – the meeting itself. **The exception:** If you are expecting a critical call, let others know and set your phone to vibrate. Leave the meeting to take the call.

INCOMING CALLS

A face-to-face conversation takes precedence over an incoming call. Let the call go to voicemail. If you are expecting a critical call, let others know *beforehand*. Don't cut off the conversation with, "I've got to take this."

PERSONAL CELL PHONE CALLS

Use discretion when placing and taking cell phone calls at the workplace – and in public. Take your call to a private area, keep

it brief, and keep your voice low. Maintain at least a 10-foot zone from others while talking – note that this negates cell phone use in elevators.

Libraries, funerals, and movie theaters are clearly no-cell phone zones. But restaurants, elevators, and even public restrooms continue to cause strife in the debate over cell phone etiquette. In any case, common sense should guide behavior at the workplace. Until there are clearer guidelines, make no assumptions and remember: when in doubt, switch to silent mode.



The SCOOP

NOT TALK'N TURKEY

After your delicious Thanksgiving dinner comes the inevitable turkey-induced slumber. Or is turkey getting a bad rap? Here's the real take on turkey.

The myth is: Because turkey contains tryptophan, the amino acid associated with causing drowsiness, eating turkey will make you sleepy.

FACT:

Turkey contains only a small amount of tryptophan (about 350 milligrams per 115 grams) – about the same as chicken and beef. In fact, pork and cheese actually contain more tryptophan per gram than does turkey.

So why the post-turkey dinner doldrums? There are a number of possibilities, but most likely it's because after a big meal, blood flow is redirected to your digestive system, temporarily reducing blood flow and oxygenation to other areas.

Having a glass or two of holiday wine can also contribute to drowsiness.

So eat up and enjoy your turkey dinner. Then, you might try taking a walk to redistribute blood flow and rev up your metabolism.

Source: Medical Myths, BMJ 2007, Volume 335

The American Heart Association **WEIGHS IN ON SUGAR**

FOR THE FIRST TIME, the American Heart Association (AHA) has issued a scientific statement recommending that people limit their intake of added sugars. The statement, published in September's issue of *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*, acknowledges the relationship between excess added sugars and health problems associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, nutritional deficiencies, and some cardiovascular risk factors.

Not to be confused with complex carbohydrates and naturally occurring sugars, **added sugars** refers to what is added to foods during processing or preparation and includes sugars and syrups added at the table.

Steadily increasing over the past 30 years, the consumption of added sugars in the United States is out of control. Americans consume an average of about 355 calories (22.2 teaspoons) of added sugars per day – mostly from desserts, candy, ready-to-eat cereals, and the number one culprit: liquid calories in the form of soft drinks and fruit drinks (about 130 calories per 12-ounce serving).

In their statement, the AHA places upper limits on the consumption of added-sugars.

They recommend that you get no more than 100 *discretionary* calories per day from added sugars.

This is equal to about 6 teaspoons of table sugar.

Discretionary calories are the small number of calories left over **after** you've eaten a balanced diet that includes fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, whole grains, and lean proteins. If you're not sure whether you're eating a balanced diet, go to www.MyPyramid.gov and click on the *MyPyramid Menu Planner* link.

For individualized dietary planning and consultation, FOH can help. Contact FOH to find out about the full range of dietary education and health promotion services available exclusively to Federal employees.

You can view the AHA's full statement at <http://americanheart.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=43&item=800>.



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80 percent of desired outcomes? You may need to group your answers on a sheet of paper for further analysis. If you find that you are using less than 80 percent of your time on activities that relate directly to desired outcomes, you should reprioritize.

Concentrating on more fruitful tasks may actually reduce work overload. If you've been concentrating most of your efforts on low-result/high intensity projects, you may be feeling overwhelmed and overworked but not very productive.

Here are some suggestions for increasing effectiveness at your job.

- Know your goals and make sure they are the "right" goals – meaning goals that advance organizational objectives.
- Periodically review recurring tasks that intrude on or interrupt high-level work. If they don't contribute to organizational goals, eliminate them – in consultation with leadership of course.
- Don't turn down opportunities for professional development and training. Professional education will pay off for you and the organization.

For help with organizational mission analysis, functional and task analysis, goal-setting, and management consultations contact FOH and ask for the Division of Organizational Development.

FOH FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The FOH Federal Consortium EAP provides assessment, counseling, referral, training, and consultation to federal employees and agencies throughout the United States. For administrative details about the program, contact Jeffrey Dunlap at 301-443-7589 or e-mail at Jeffrey.Dunlap@foh.hhs.gov. To visit us on the Web, go to www.FOH4You.com.

Help is available all day, all week, all year.
800-222-0364, TTY: 888-262-7848

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This newsletter is available electronically at www.foh.hhs.gov/eapnews.

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